

May 12, 2003

SUBJECT: FCC Plan to Permit Local Television Station
Monopolies

The issue of who owns the Nation's broadcast stations has become a very critical issue in the United States. It will have a profound effect on the diversity, competitiveness and quality of news, entertainment and information received by the American people. On June 2, the Federal Communications Commission is planning on authorizing sweeping changes to the American news media. The rule changes, which could allow our local TV stations, newspaper, radio stations, and cable providers to all be owned by one company will result in a concentration of ownership which would become deeply destructive to our democracy.

This situation requires our representatives in the Federal Communications Commission to put a stop to the Commission's continuing monopolistic-enhancing deregulation practices.

The radio landscape makes clear that concentration will hurt the media and will severely reduce the informational and cultural options we have up to this point enjoyed. After the FCC and Congress relaxed radio ownership rules, corporate giant Clear Channel Communications swept in and bought hundreds of stations. Clear Channel has used its might to support monolithically uniform, automated radio stations, which had heretofore been manned by live, diversely oriented human beings. In many towns that used to have a wide array of radio options of music, cultural events and news, Clear Channel is now the only available source on the dial.

Recently, newspapers have reported that police in small towns that were going to be struck by dangerous storms and tornadoes found it virtually impossible to give the inhabitants a radio warning as there was no live station manager to contact. The stations were all computer-automated. This monopoly power has become a dangerous thing, and Congress should be guarding against these unhealthy effects.

This upcoming rule change could change the landscape for all media and usher in an era in which a few corporations control our access to news and entertainment. Please support a diverse, competitive media vista by opposing these FCC regulation changes. And certainly, I want to strongly urge you to work to roll back the previous radio monopolies that already has homogenized our radio landscape.

Regards,
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